

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NEA-07 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 CIAE-00 PRS-01 CU-02 SP-02 /051 W

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R 120632Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4462

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 4050

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, CH, IN

SUBJ: LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS SUPPORTS INDIA'S NEW FOREIGN
POLICY

REF: (A) PEKING 645 (NOTAL, (B) HONG KONG 3469

1. A LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS COMMENTARY OFFERS THE
STRONGEST STATEMENT THUS FAR OF IMPLICIT CHINESE
APPROVAL FOR INDIA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY. "TA KUNG
PAO" (ENGLISH EDITION) APR 7 STATES THAT THE NEW
INDIAN GOVERNMENT " SEEMS TO HAVE OPTED" FOR A
FOREIGN POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND IMPROVING ITS
RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. THIS, IT ADDS,
COULD STRENGTHEN INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND KEEP
SUPERPOWER CONTENTION OUT OF THE SUBCONTINENT AND
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OUT OF THE INDIAN OCEAN.

2. THIS CONCLUSION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DRAWN
FROM RECENT STATEMENTS MADE BY INDIA'S NEW LEADERS.
IN ADDITION TO REPORTING PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S
REMARKS CONCERNING A MORE EVEN-HANDED APPROACH
TO THE SOVIETS (REFTEL B), CHINA'S OFFICIAL NCNA

APRIL 1 RAN EXCERPTS FROM A PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY A.B. VAJPAYEE, INDIA'S NEW MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. INCLUDED IN THE ACCOUNT WERE STATEMENTS EXPRESSING INDIA'S DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS WITH PAKISTAN AND CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS TO SEEK AN AMICABLE SOLUTION WITH BANGLADESH OVER THE GANGES WATER PROBLEM. NCNA ALSO NOTED VAJPAYEE'S "HOPE THAT INDIA'S RELATION WITH CHINA WOULD FURTHER IMPROVE".

3. RECENT PRC COMMENTARY ON INDIA HAS BEEN MORE CIRCUMSPECT. AN EDITOR'S NOTE IN "PEOPLE'S DAILY" APRIL 3 CLAIMED IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHETHER OR NOT THE DESAI GOVERNMENT "WILL BE ABLE TO CHANGE INDIA'S HEGEMONIC METHOD OF THE BIG BULLYING THE SMALL", WHILE A MARCH 30 COMMENTARY PREDICTED ONLY THAT THE RECENT ELECTION "WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING ON THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH ASIAN SUBCONTINENT AND THE INDIAN OCEAN". THIS CAUTIOUS APPROACH SQUARES WITH THE OPINION OF CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA THAT ANY NEW DEPARTURES IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY WOULD DEVELOP ONLY GRADUALLY AND THAT DELHI WAS STILL HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIETS (REFTEL A).
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